

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS HARARE 001113

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/PDPA DALTON, MITCHELL AND SIMS AND AF/S RAYNOR

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [KPAO](#) [KMDR](#) [ZI](#)

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION MASS ACTION IN ZIM; HARARE

11. Editorials in the mainstream media remain sharply divided over the implications of the week-long national protests organized by the opposition Movement of Democratic Change (MDC) to pressure Robert Mugabe to the negotiating table. While the independent media is hailing the five-day strike, which began on June 2 by completely shutting down all commercial and industrial activity in Harare and other major cities, as a welcome move to show the country's displeasure at Robert Mugabe's leadership, the government-controlled press continues to clamor for the incarceration of MDC leader Morgan Tsvangirai. Editorial excerpts follow:
12. Under headline "The people's loud and clear voice" the independent daily "The Daily News" (06/03) comments:

" . . . But the stunning shutdown of the entire nation, with the capital Harare eerily deserted and resembling a ghost town, dramatically and graphically underlined who now calls the shots in the power stakes in Zimbabwe. The overwhelming response of Zimbabweans to stay put at home after dire threats from the government that it would crush the protests showed that, while the administration had possibly won this phase of the battle, it had significantly lost the war. The nationwide shutdown dramatized in no uncertain terms. . . that the people will no longer be cowed and that people power is now on the ascendancy. . . All signals point to one certainty: freedom is coming tomorrow."
13. Under headline "Tsvangirai must face full wrath of law" the government-controlled daily "The Herald" (06/03) comments:

"It is Julius Caesar who is famed for saying, 'If you must break the law do it once to seize power. Otherwise you must obey it.' The MDC leader, Morgan Tsvangirai, and his supporters followed Caesar's advice and broke the law yesterday but failed to seize power. They now face the full wrath of the law. . . According to the MDC, this was a make-or-break demonstration and its gamble has fallen flat on its face as the ZANU-PF government has clearly shown that it has both the might and the will to resist such silly machinations. . . As we have stated before, no amount of force will stop a genuine uprising by the majority of the people against any government if there was a real cause. . . It is, therefore, important for Tsvangirai to note that he cannot manufacture an uprising and no amount of money can buy him the people's support. This is why his paid demonstrators could not stand-up to their convictions when confronted by the law enforcement agents. . . ."

SULLIVAN